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The Local Angle:

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Week of April 14, 1975

BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT POST WORLD WAR II HIGH

WASHINGTON -- The black unemployment rate rose to 14.2 percent in March, up from 13.5 percent in February, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported.

The Labor Department reported that the March increase in joblessness was shared by virtually all worker groups. Rates were near or above recorded all-time highs also for women, teenagers, whites, household heads and fulltime workers.

Blacks accounted for about 30 percent of "discouraged workers" -- workers who become discouraged with job prospects and give up the search for work.

On a national basis, unemployment increased further and employment continued to decline in March.

At 8.7 percent, the Nation's unemployment rate was up 0.5 percentage point from January and February and 4.1 percentage points from the October 1973 low. This was the highest rate since 1941.

Total employment (as measured by the monthly survey of households) declined by nearly 200,000 in March to 83.8 million. Though not as large as in earlier months, this marked the sixth consecutive month of employment reductions, which have totaled 2.6 million since last September. With the unemployment increase of 500,000 exceeding the employment decrease, the labor force rose by over 300,000; this increase partially erased the large labor force drop in February.

Total nonagricultural payroll employment (as measured by the monthly survey of establishments) also continued to decrease in March, but the 325,000 drop--to 76.4 million--was not as sharp as in previous months.

(MORE)

Since last October, nonagricultural payroll jobs have receded by 2.5 million, with the manufacturing and construction industries bearing the brunt of the cutbacks. Because there was also a further constriction in the workweek, total man-hours, the most comprehensive measure of labor activity, continued its descent.

Unemployment resumed its steep upward trend in March, after leveling off temporarily between January and February, largely because of withdrawals from the labor force. At 8.0 million, the number of unemployed persons in March was 500,000 above the previous month and 3.1 million above the August 1974 level, when joblessness began its rapid climb. More than two-thirds of the increased unemployment in March can be traced to job loss, as the number of persons who lost their last job rose to 4.4 million. Since last August, the number of job losers has increased by 2.3 million, about 700,000 women and 1.6 million men. This rise accounted for over three-fourths of the overall increase in unemployment.

The March increase in joblessness was shared by virtually all worker groups. Rates were near or above alltime highs for adult women (8.5 percent), teenagers (20.6 percent), whites (8.0 percent), blacks (14.2 percent), household heads (5.8 percent), and full-time workers (8.3 percent). Rates for adult men and married men, at 6.8 and 5.2 percent respectively, were up significantly from the previous month but were still below post-World War II highs.

With the exception of white-collar workers, there were widespread increases in the unemployment rates among the major occupational groups. Blue-collar workers were particularly hard hit, as their jobless rate moved from 10.9 percent in February to a record 12.5 percent in March, double

(MORE)

their year-earlier rate. Similarly, all major industries showed increases. The unemployment rate for construction workers was up sharply, to 18.1 percent, and the rate for manufacturing workers rose for the tenth consecutive month to 11.4 percent--like the blue-collar rate, more than double a year ago.

The unemployment rate of workers covered by state unemployment insurance programs, at 6.5 percent in March, was up from 5.9 percent in February and 5.5 percent in January. However, it remained well below postwar record levels. The number of workers claiming state unemployment insurance benefits, 4.3 million, represented 53 percent of the jobless total this March compared with 45 percent a year earlier.

The unemployment rate for Vietnam-era veterans aged 20-34 was essentially unchanged from February and January at a level--9.0 percent--that was below the rate for nonveterans which rose to 10.5 percent. The rate for the youngest veterans (20-24 years old) was also about the same as in February, at 17.5 percent, but continued to be higher than their nonveteran counterparts (14.7 percent).

The average (mean) duration of unemployment held relatively steady in March at 11.4 weeks, after rising sharply in January and February. However, long-term unemployment--persons unemployed 15 weeks or more--increased 170,000 from the February level to 2.0 million. This increase followed jumps totaling 700,000 in the previous 3 months.

In addition to the increase in joblessness, the number of persons working part time but wanting full-time jobs, at 3.9 million, was up 170,000 in March, after showing little change in February. When combined with unemployment on a man-hours basis, the resulting measure--labor force time

lost--reached 9.6 percent in March, up from 8.9 percent in February and 5.6 percent in March 1974.

Total employment edged downward in March to 83.8 million (seasonally adjusted), with adult men accounting for all of the decline. Since last September's peak, adult men have comprised two-thirds of the 2.6 million drop in employment.

On an occupational basis, an employment gain for white-collar workers in March was more than offset by declines among craft and kindred workers and operatives in the blue-collar occupations, both of whom have been hard hit by the slump in economic activity. Employment in these two groups has declined by 900,000 and 1.7 million, respectively, from their peaks of last summer.

The civilian labor force rose by 320,000 in March to 91.8 million, seasonally adjusted, after posting a 580,000 decline in February. The March increase occurred entirely among adult women as the adult male and teenage labor force levels were unchanged over the month. The overall labor force was no larger in March than last October despite an increase of 1.1 million in the working-age population.

Participation in the labor force, at 61.0 percent of the civilian noninstitutional population, was essentially unchanged from February but well below the levels prevailing over the October-January period. During recessionary periods, some workers leave the labor force because of discouragement over job prospects. This has happened in the present downturn.

During periods of economic distress, some workers become discouraged with job prospects and give up the search for work. Persons who are not actively seeking work are not counted as "unemployed" but are classified

as not in the labor force. Data have been collected on the number of persons not looking for jobs because they believed they could not find work--"discouraged workers"--since 1967.

Up to this year, the number of discouraged workers has fluctuated cyclically within a range of 550,000 to 850,000. In the first quarter of this year, however, the discouraged count soared to 1.1 million, the highest level since the initiation of the series.

As might be expected, the incidence of discouragement lags market conditions, following about one quarter after the unemployment rate during the period these data have been available. Thus, while the recent increases of unemployment began in the third quarter of 1974, the number of discouraged workers did not rise until the fourth quarter. Since the third quarter, the number of discouraged has increased by nearly half a million (73 percent).

A large proportion of the discouraged are younger or older workers, women, and blacks--groups who experience the greatest difficulty in finding jobs. For example, blacks accounted for about 30 percent of the discouraged total in the first quarter, a much larger ratio than their proportion of the labor force (11 percent). By contrast, only a small proportion of the discouraged are males aged 25 to 59. In 1974, this group represented 42 percent of the labor force but less than 10 percent of the discouraged worker total.

Total nonagricultural payroll employment was 76.4 million (seasonally adjusted) in March, down 325,000 from February and 2.5 million from last October's peak level.

In manufacturing, employment decreased by 160,000 in March, following declines ranging from 350,000 to 500,000 in each of the previous 4 months.

(MORE)

Employment in contract construction dropped 110,000 in March to 3.5 million, following a decline of 190,000 in the previous month. Construction jobs have fallen 640,000 from the alltime high reached in February 1974.

In the service-producing industries, the number of payroll jobs fell slightly, as an increase in state and local government was outweighed by declines elsewhere in the sector.

Employment in the services sector has declined by 260,000 since last October.

The average workweek for all production or nonsupervisory workers on nonfarm payrolls continued to decline in March, dropping 0.2 hour to 35.9 hours, seasonally adjusted. The average workweek has fallen 0.8 hour since last September and 1.3 hours from the April 1973 high.

In most of the manufacturing industries, average hours edged down, resulting in an overall drop of a tenth of an hour to 38.7 hours.

The aggregate man-hours of private nonfarm production or nonsupervisory workers dropped 1.2 percent in March, the sixth consecutive monthly decline. Since September 1974, the index of total man-hours has fallen 7.0 percent to 105.5 (1967=100). The index of worker hours in manufacturing also declined by 1.2 percent, much less than rate of decrease in the previous 3 months; at 85.9 (1967=100) the index was 15.9 percent lower than March a year ago and 17.9 percent below the alltime high reached in November 1973.

Average hourly earnings of production or nonsupervisory workers on nonfarm payrolls increased 0.5 percent in March and 8.0 percent from a year ago (seasonally adjusted). Average weekly earnings, however, edged down 0.1 percent over the month, owing to the decline in the workweek, but were up 5.7 percent from March 1974.

(MORE)

The Hourly Earnings Index--earnings adjusted for overtime in manufacturing, seasonality, and the effects of changes in the proportion of workers in high-wage and low-wage industries--was 168.7 (1967=100) in March, 1.0 percent higher than in February. The index was 9.8 percent above March a year ago. During the 12-month period ending in February, the Hourly Earnings Index in dollars of constant purchasing power declined 1.6 percent.

# # #

PRESIDENT CREATES NEW COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING BODY IN CONSTRUCTION

WASHINGTON -- President Ford has created a new Collective Bargaining Committee in Construction to further "more effective collective bargaining in the industry."

The new labor-management committee, chaired by the Secretary of Labor, is charged with a wide range of tasks aimed at facilitating collective bargaining and encouraging peaceful labor-management negotiations.

Established by an executive order signed by the President on April 1, the committee is to be composed of 10 labor and 10 management representatives appointed by the President.

Other members include the director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and any additional alternate members appointed by the Labor Secretary.

Among the committee's responsibilities are to:

--Facilitate and encourage peaceful negotiation of collective bargaining agreements at local and area levels;

--Assist in providing a data bank of wage and benefit information;

--Encourage local coordinated bargaining and larger area bargaining wherever appropriate; and

--Seek to resolve bargaining disputes "that cannot otherwise be reasonably resolved."

In carrying out these responsibilities, the committee is authorized to confer with and make recommendations to parties engaged in disputes concerning provisions of their agreements or the structure of collective bargaining.

The committee is also charged with promoting more effective machinery for resolving disputes, in keeping with the interests of each branch of the construction industry and existing procedures that have already proven effective.

(MORE)

Other functions of the new committee--established at the recommendation of an interim construction labor-management committee that has met regularly since November 1974--include:

--Compiling, reviewing and analyzing data on regional manpower requirements, availability and training in construction;

--Considering measures to promote more stable demand for construction labor and provide more weeks of work per year;

--Taking steps to increase construction productivity under collective bargaining agreements;

--Considering collective-bargaining problems which arise from activities of separate federal agencies as they affect the construction industry; and

--Encouraging establishment of similar regional or local labor-management committees on an area basis when deemed appropriate.

The new committee is directed to make periodic reports on its work to the President.

In addition, national labor and management organizations are encouraged to review the committee's work and report their findings annually to the President.

# # #

OVER 8,000 MINORITIES BENEFIT FROM
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN 1974

WASHINGTON -- About 8,104 minorities benefitted from apprenticeship outreach programs during the 1974 calendar year, Secretary of Labor John T. Dunlop has announced.

Administered by the Labor Department's Manpower Administration, these programs helped minorities--blacks, Hispanos, Indians, Orientals and others--move into or upgrade their skills in the construction and building trades.

The Labor Department programs are:

--Apprenticeship Outreach Program. About 6,103 minorities, 17 to 26 years, were placed in apprenticeships in 1974. More than 35,000 have been placed since the program began in 1968.

--Journeyman Upgrading Program. This program provided additional training to 2,037 underskilled workers so they could obtain full journeyman status and become union members in 1974. About 10,700 have attained journeyman status since this program began in 1968.

Two black organizations--the National Urban League and Recruitment and Training Program (RTP), formerly the Workers' Defense League--have assisted about 24,700 persons enter apprenticeships or obtain journeyman status through their efforts as sponsors of these two programs.

Operating in 105 cities nationwide, the Apprenticeship Outreach Program (AOP), tutors and counsels minority youths to prepare them to pass apprenticeship examinations. The preparatory courses run from four to 10 weeks.

On passing the test, a trainee can be enrolled in a formal industry-funded apprenticeship program, lasting from two to six years. The apprentice receives periodic pay increases reaching about 90 percent of a journeyman's wages in the final year of training.

Young people served by the AOP are placed in apprenticeship programs

(More)

registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training in the Department of Labor's Manpower Administration or with state apprenticeship agencies.

The Journeyman Upgrading Program, in 73 cities, helps persons of any age who have varying degrees of experience in construction trades but have not been able to gain journeyman status and join a union. It provides on-the-job training to upgrade their knowledge and skills so they can become journeymen and union members.

The apprentices and journeymen in the programs are trained in one of 18 building and construction trades. These include such occupations as carpenter, bricklayer, plasterer, electrician, plumber-pipefitter, cement finisher, painter, structural iron worker, and operating engineer.

Those interested in either apprenticeship or journeyman programs should contact their nearest state employment service office.

The sponsors and cumulative number of apprentices and journeymen placed by them from 1968 through 1974 are as follows:

SPONSORS	APPRENTICES	JOURNEYMEN
Urban League	12,691	1,724
Recruitment and Training Program	7,771	2,539
Human Resources Development Inst.	5,378	1,594
Building Trades Councils	4,367	624
Other Sponsors (14)	5,097	4,231

* * *

JOB TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED, LOW SKILL
WORKERS BY PAINTERS LABOR ORGANIZATION

WASHINGTON - About 554 persons, unemployed and low skilled workers, will get training to prepare them for apprenticeship and to obtain journeyman status in the painters union, the U.S. Department of Labor has announced.

The National Joint Painting and Decorating Apprenticeship and Training Committee, under a $590,000 on-the-job training contract, will prepare 224 unemployed persons for apprenticeship and upgrade the job skills of 320 painters and decorators to enable them to obtain journeyman status.

Disadvantaged persons, Vietnam-era veterans and other jobless persons will be among those selected for pre-apprenticeship training. They will receive individual job training leading to full employment.

The pre-apprentice gets 5 weeks of familiarization training and 20 weeks of on-the-job training.

Journeymen will get training to upgrade their skills in the use of new materials and installation techniques.

More than 2800 persons have received training under similar contracts since June 1968, funded under the Manpower Development and Training Act. The present contract is the first under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973.

The one-year contract covers programs in 18 states and ends Feb. 15, 1976.

One of the most significant nontraining objectives of previous contracts was the beginning, through collective bargaining, of a one-cent-per-hour contribution in some local areas to the National Apprenticeship Trust Fund. Eventually, the trust will provide funds for a library of visual aids, maintain field staff and provide subsidies of joint apprenticeship committees to assist in developing their apprenticeship and journeyman upgrading programs.

(MORE)

The National Joint Painting and Decorating Apprenticeship and Training Committee is located at 1750 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

A list of training opportunities by program and state follows:

	APPRENTICE		JOURNEYMAN			
STATE	No.	Cost	No.	Cost	Allowances	Total Cost
Arizona	14	$12,780	16	$ 2,048	$ 6,405	$21,233
California	56	51,120	32	4,096	4,096	80,836
Colorado	14	12,780			6,405	19,185
Dist. of Colo.			16	2,048		2,048
Florida	14	12,780	16	2,048	6,405	21,233
Idaho			16	2,048		2,048
Illinois			32	4,096		4,096
Louisiana			16	2,048		2,048
Massachusetts			16	2,048		2,048
Michigan			16	2,048		2,048
Minnesota	20	25,560	32	4,096	12,810	42,466
Nevada			16	2,048		2,048
New Jersey	20	25,560	16	2,048	12,810	40,418
New York	14	12,780	32	4,096	6,405	23,281
Oregon	14			2,048		2,048
Tennessee		12,780	16		6,405	19,185
Texas	42	38,340	16	2,048	19,215	59,603
Utah			16	2,048		2,048
Total:	224	$204,480	320	$40,960	$102,480	$347,920 *

* The balance of $242,080 will be used to coordinate services between local programs and an allowance fund to support probable variances between local programs. Once these variances and their costs have been determined, any residual balance will be used to increase the number of slots and, possibly, the number of programs.

###

86 JOBLESS TO GET ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AS TRACTOR-TRAILER DRIVERS

WASHINGTON -- Eighty-six jobless people in the three mid-Atlantic states will have $5-an hour jobs as tractor-trailer drivers waiting for them if they successfully finish eight weeks of intensive training financed by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The Teamsters Union is providing the training at Fleetville, Pa., near Scranton. Trainees will be recruited in Pennsylvania and parts of New York and New Jersey under a $250,000 contract authorized by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

Minority group members and Vietnam-era veterans will get priority in the selection of trainees and both men and women will be recruited by the union.

The training features class work and "hands on" operation of modern tractor-trailer units.

The Teamsters' Joint Council No. 40, in Pittsburgh, will recruit trainees in that area and the western part of the state. Joint Council No. 53, in Philadelphia, will recruit there, eastern Pennsylvania, and in New Jersey south of a line between Camden and Atlantic City. Joint Council No. 17, in Rochester, will select trainees from seven counties in upstate New York. In all, there are 58 local Teamsters unions in these areas.

Each eight-week training course will cost about $2,900 per trainee. The first three periods will have 24 trainees each, the last one, 14. Training began Feb. 24, and goes to Nov. 24, 1975.

Teamsters Joint Councils have had two previous contracts, the first an experimental and demonstration project. Under the second contract, Teamster Councils in Rochester, Utica, Buffalo, Albany, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia trained and placed 322 applicants as tractor-trailer drivers at a cost of $809,000.

The union's project director is Charles Walters, Teamsters Joint Councils Nos. 40 and 53, Deer Lake Campus, Fleetville, Pa., 18420. Telephone: (717) 945-5135.

###

GUIDELINES TO HELP VICTIMS
OF PAST JOB DISCRIMINATION

WASHINGTON -- Proposed rules for identifying persons currently hurt by past employment discrimination and steps needed for remedy have been published for public comment by the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC).

The "Affected Class and Back Pay Guidelines" state, in part, that:

-- affected class employees should be permitted to carry total plant seniority into a new department, even if seniroity provisions of collective bargaining agreements require loss of job security or promotion rights as condition of transfer;

-- in transferring to a new department or promotion line, an employee can't be forced to take a pay cut;

-- in general, collective bargaining agreements may not be used as defense for violating federal contract compliance requirements.

"Although most of these policies have been in effect, they have never been detailed in regulations," OFCC Director Philip J. Davis said. "The final version will provide definitive, uniform guidelines for the compliance agencies to follow in enforcing Executive Order 11246."

(MORE)

The proposed guidelines were published in the March 26, 1975, Federal Register. Interested parties may send comments until April 25 to:

Mr. Philip J. Davis, Director
Office of Federal Contract Compliance - ESA
U.S. Department of Labor
Washington, D.C. 20210

Executive Order 11246 prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. It also requires these employers to take affirmative action to provide equal employment opportunity.

# # # #

NEW FEDERAL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM
TO ASSIST SOME 3.5 MILLION VETERANS

WASHINGTON -- Guidelines for a new federal affirmative action program to hire and promote disabled and Vietnam-era veterans are being developed by a U.S. Department of Labor task force, Assistant Secretary for Employment Standards Bernard E. DeLury has announced.

The affirmative action requirement is set forth in the Vietnam-Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, enacted on Dec. 3, 1974.

Employers with federal contracts or subcontracts of $10,000 or more are covered by the law. Affirmative action extends to all employees of a covered contractor, not just those performing work on the contract.

The law covers veterans for four years from the date of discharge, and all disabled veterans. There are approximately 3.5 million veterans in these groups.

"Our country owes its veterans a great deal," and the Department of Labor will be doing its part on their behalf by implementing the new affirmative action, DeLury said.

The Labor Department's Employment Standards Administration will publish proposed regulations in the Federal Register with respect to specific affirmative action requirements and enforcement procedures for public comment this spring.

The earlier Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972 required contractors to give "special emphasis" to the employment of disabled and Vietnam-era veterans, and it covered only those employees working on the contract.

# # #

EXPANDED TRADE ADJUSTMENT HELP
PROGRAM TAKES EFFECT

WASHINGTON -- An expanded adjustment assistance program for workers adversely affected by imports took effect April 3, under provisions of the Trade Act of 1974, the U.S. Department of Labor has announced.

The Trade Act provides that workers who believe they have been or will be injured by increased imports may petition the Secretary of Labor for certification of eligibility to apply for adjustment assistance. Cooperating state agencies will be generally responsible for delivery of cash benefits and manpower services to eligible workers.

Expanded benefits for eligible workers include:

--Cash trade readjustment allowances amounting to 70 percent of a worker's average weekly wage, not to exceed the national average weekly manufacturing wage, for up to 52 weeks. Workers may receive up to 26 additional weeks of allowances to complete approved training. Workers aged 60 or older when separated from their last job may receive up to 26 additional weeks of allowances. No worker may receive more than 78 weeks of allowances.

--Training, counseling, testing, placement services and supportive and other services.

--Job search and relocation allowances. Unemployed workers who cannot be expected to find suitable employment within their own commuting area may qualify for a job search allowance to assist them in obtaining employment elsewhere in the U.S. Workers may receive up to $500 as reimbursement for 80 percent of necessary job search expenses. Workers who find jobs outside their commuting area may be paid a relocation allowance to reimburse them for 80 percent of reasonable and necessary moving expenses plus a lump sum (up to $500) equal to three times their average weekly wage.

Workers are not eligible for trade adjustment assistance under the Trade Act if their last separation from adversely affected employment occurred more than one year before the date of their petition or if they were last laid off before Oct. 3, 1974.

(MORE)

Workers are eligible for adjustment assistance under the new law if they have been employed at the affected firm or plant for 26 weeks out of the 52 weeks prior to layoff, at wages of $30 or more per week.

The new program will be administered by the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance, located in the Labor Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs.

###

OSHA HEAD SAYS JOB SAFETY, HEALTH PROGRAMS WILL CUT COSTS, UP PROFITS

WASHINGTON -- Effective in-plant job safety and health programs which cut costs and increase profits can ease the current recession squeeze, a top Labor Department official said.

Assistant Secretary of Labor John H. Stender, who heads the Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), said that in 1973, according to figures of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the pre-tax profits of all non-financial corporations amounted to $78.2 billion.

"In that same year, according to National Safety Council data, the cost to the nation of job-related deaths, injuries and illnesses totaled $14 billion," he noted, or almost 18 percent of the profits.

Addressing a luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Cleveland, Stender suggested that even a cut by half of these costs would spark profits, increase productivity, and help the economy. He also had a morning meeting with the Associated Industries of Cleveland.

He said that any method of cutting these costs would be a sound capital investment. He added that the rules and regulations of OSHA can help employers identify health and safety hazards causing accidents that drain the profits of American business.

Stender acknowledged that it is a difficult task to identify these hazards and to set protective job safety and health standards -- and not disrupt production.

"But despite the complexity of the task," he stated, "we're going to do that job. We have to. There are lives at stake."

He said OSHA wants to join with Rotarians and all other businessmen "in the fight for safety and health on the job" -- a fight that will help the economy at the same time.

###

LABOR TURNOVER IN MANUFACTURING: FEBRUARY 1975

WASHINGTON -- Factory layoffs were unchanged from January, quits continued to decline, and total accessions rose, according to preliminary figures reported by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Total accessions to manufacturers' payrolls, which include new hires, recalls, and transfers from other establishments within the same company, were 33 per 1,000 workers in February (seasonally adjusted), compared with 31 per 1,000 in January and 30 per 1,000 in December. These increases probably reflect workers being recalled from layoffs. However, the February rate is still 10 per 1,000 less than the year-ago level.

New hires remained unchanged in February at a seasonally adjusted level of 15 per 1,000 workers following rapid declines since last summer. New hires were less than half of the February 1974 level.

Quits continued their decline to 12 per 1,000 workers (seasonally adjusted), their lowest level since August 1961. The quit rate, which partially reflects worker assessment of job opportunities, is also less than one half of its year ago level.

At 35 per 1,000 workers, the layoff rate remained unchanged in February at the highest level since March 1958 and reflects a more than tripling of the rate since last summer.

# # #

WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX--MARCH 1975

WASHINGTON -- The Wholesale Price Index for All Commodities declined 0.5 percent from February to March before seasonal adjustment, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. Lower prices of farm products and processed foods and feeds more than offset a small increase for industrial commodities.

The farm products index fell 2.0 percent, led by decreases for grains, oilseeds, and fresh and dried vegetables. The index for processed foods and feeds moved down 2.9 percent, principally due to reduced prices for sugar and confectionery and manufactured animal feeds.

The 0.3 percent advance for industrial commodities was caused largely by higher prices for chemicals and allied products.

In March, the All Commodities WPI was 170.4 (1967=100), 12.5 percent higher than a year earlier. Industrial commodities increased 18.6 percent over the year Prices for farm products were down 13.1 percent, while processed foods and feeds were up 8.8 percent.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the All Commodities Wholesale Price Index declined 0.6 percent in March, following decreases of 0.3 percent in January and 0.8 percent in February.

Price indexes for farm products and processed foods and feeds both declined for the fourth consecutive month. The index for farm products declined 2.3 percent, and the processed foods and feeds index dropped 2.8 percent.

The industrial commodities index edged up 0.2 percent, after increasing 0.5 percent in both January and February.

Over the calendar quarter ended in March, the WPI declined at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.7 percent. This was in contrast to increases at seasonally adjusted annual rates of 35.2 and 13.4 percent in the third and fourth quarters of 1974 respectively.

(MORE)

The industrial commodities index moved up at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.1 percent, somewhat more moderate than the 8.2 percent rate of increase in the previous quarter and substantially slower than the 28.3 percent rate registered during the third quarter of last year. Farm products and processed foods and feeds each dropped sharply over the first quarter of 1975. Both indexes had risen during the previous 2 quarters.

On a stage of processing basis, prices for crude materials for further processing (excluding foods, feeds, and fibers) declined 0.5 percent, seasonally adjusted, from February to March. This was the sixth consecutive monthly decrease. Lower prices for bituminous coal more than offset increases for hides and skins and crude petroleum.

The index for intermediate materials, supplies, and components (excluding foods and feeds) rose 0.2 percent in March, about the same as in February. Prices were higher for agricultural and industrial chemicals, electric power, some iron and steel products, and fabricated metal products. These increases were largely offset by lower prices for nonferrous metals and synthetic textile products.

Prices for finished goods edged up 0.1 percent from February to March. Prices of producer finished goods were higher; however, consumer finished goods declined due to lower prices for consumer foods.

Consumer foods declined 1.6 percent in March, while other consumer finished goods rose 0.3 percent. Among consumer food products, prices dropped for sugar and confectionery, pork, fresh and dried vegetables, and processed poultry. However, prices rose for fresh fruits. Consumer finished goods other than food were up 0.3 percent over the month compared with an increase of 0.1 percent in February.

(MORE)

Consumer nondurables rose 0.2 percent primarily because of higher prices for gasoline. Consumer durables rose 0.6 percent, as special rebates for passenger cars were reduced or eliminated.

Producer finished goods rose 1.0 percent, reflecting increases for some types of machinery and equipment as well as higher prices for motor vehicles.

# # #

Dear Consumer

Vinyl Chloride Is Now Banned

By Virginia Knauer
Special Assistant to the President
and Director
Office of Consumer Affairs
Department of Health, Education and Welfare

During 1974, three Federal agencies took action against vinyl chloride.

This chemical had been used as a propellant in some aerosol products. But when research showed that vinyl chloride might be a cause of liver cancer, the government moved to protect consumers.

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned pesticide sprays containing vinyl chloride as a propellant.
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned the use of vinyl chloride in drugs and cosmetic products.
- Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) banned the use of vinyl chloride in household aerosol products—such as spray paints, solvents and adhesives—under its jurisdiction.

All banned products in stores were recalled; and no new products are being manufactured with vinyl chloride. But some consumers may still have old cans in their homes. You can protect yourself by writing for the agencies' lists of banned aerosol products containing vinyl chloride. Compare products' names and lot numbers with the aerosol cans on your shelves.

- Write to Office of Public Affairs, A-107, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC 20460; ask for press releases on banned aerosol products.
- Write or call your regional FDA office requesting complete list of drugs and cosmetics containing vinyl chloride. (Check phone directory for FDA, in U. S. Government listings, under "Health, Education and Welfare Department.")
- Write to Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207. (Or call toll-free hot line: 800-638-2666 [in Maryland: 800-492-2937].) Ask for fact sheet on vinyl chloride. (Since CPSC does not yet have a complete list of consumer household products containing vinyl chloride, you may want to write directly to manufacturers of items you have. State each product's name and lot number, and ask whether the propellant contains vinyl chloride.)

When you write to CPSC, also ask for information on their repurchasing regulation. CPSC has the authority to make manufacturers repurchase banned products from consumers. (FDA and EPA do not have this authority.) This means that you should be able to get refunds if you have aerosols, containing vinyl chloride, which come under CPSC's jurisdiction.

Week of April 14, 1975

FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Compliance officers for the U.S. Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration rarely give advance notice of inspections.

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When an employer is cited by the U.S. Department of Labor for having unsafe equipment, he is usually given a period of time to correct the situation.

# # #

A federal interdepartmental task force is working with states to help them upgrade their workers' compensation laws, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

# # #

A person or group believing a state plan approved by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is being improperly administered may submit a detailed, written complaint to the nearest OSHA regional office.

# # #

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the U.S. Department of Labor has approved the plans of 26 states for administering their own job safety and health programs.

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